

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3902

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

SECDEF WASHDC

USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HEIGHTS, CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3553

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NU

SUBJECT: SOMOZA'S HEALTH: POLITICAL ACTIVITY

REFS: (A) MANAGUA 3542, (B) MANAGUA A-31 OF MARCH 18, 1977 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ALL POLITICAL SEGMENTS ARE ACTIVELY CONTEMPLATING THE POSSIBILITY OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AS A RESULT OF PRES. SOMOZA'S HEART CONDITION. THEY ARE SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE EMB. WE ARE STATING ONLY GENERAL POLICY AND REFUSING TO BECOME INVOLVED IN COUNSELING, PLOTTING, OR ENCOURAGING THE OPPOSITION TO LOOK TO US FOR ANY INTERVENTION. THERE ARE PRESENTLY NO SIGNS OF ANY UNUSUAL MILITARY ACTIVITY OR SIGNALS OF PREPARATION BY TERRORISTS OR REVOLUTIONARIES FOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY

1. EMB. HAS RECEIVED VISIT FROM OR BEEN INVITED TO MEET SEPARATELY WITH ALL SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES, FACTIONS, AND MOVEMENTS. THESE INCLUDE THE OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PCN), THE
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FACTION LED BY FORMER PCN PRESIDENT DR. AGUERO, THE FACTION WHICH CALLS ITSELF THE AUTHENTIC CONSERVATIVE PARTY, AND THE COALITION OF OPPOSITION PARTIES AND LABOR MOVEMENTS, THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERATION (UDEL). EMB ROLE IN THESE CONTACTS IS TO ACT AS INTERESTED LISTENER, TO REJECT ANY SUGGESTION US HAS ANY ACTIVE ROLE TO PLAY IF SUCCESSION CRISIS DEVELOPS, AND TO EXPLAIN U.S. PREFERENCE FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BASED ON CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES.

2. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF UDEL AND AGUERO, ALL OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER POSSIBILITY OF COUP BY THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN) AND HAVE EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL SUCCESSION. THEY BELIEVE THAT THESE PROCEDURES, I.E., SELECTION OF AN INTERIM PRESIDENT BY THE CONGRESS FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS, WOULD RESULT IN THE SELECTION OF PABLO RENER, THE SENATE PRESIDENT (SEE REF B).

3. THE PCN OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED THE EMB THROUGH SEN. JULIO YCAZA THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO USE ITS VOTES IN THE CONGRESS TO SUPPORT RENER IN ORDER TO THWART THE SELECTION OF EITHER OF HIS TWO CHIEF RIVALS, I.E.

,
CORNLIO HUECK, PRESIDENT OF DEPUTIES, OR HUECK'S POLITICAL ENEMY, SEN. ORLANDO MONTENEGRO. THEY BELIEVE BECAUSE OF THE HUECK-MONTENEGRO CONFLICT THEIR MINORITY VOTES COULD DECIDE THE ISSUE IN FAVOR OF RENER.

4. UDEL HAS FOCUSED ITS ATTENTION ON FORCING A CONCLUSION THAT SOMOZA IS PRESENTLY INCAPACITATED AND THAT CONSTITUTIONAL SUCCESSION PROCEDURES SHOULD BE INVOKED NOW. UDEL PRESIDENT, PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO, AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS BELIEVE A COUP IS A POSSIBILITY FROM EITHER A SOMOZA-FAMILY DYNASTY GROUP OR FROM A GROUP OF YOUNG DEMOCRATIC-ORIENTED OFFICERS. THEY WOULD PREFER THE LATTER TO ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVE AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE U.S. SUPPORT SUCH A COUP. THEY WOULD PREFER TO SEE PABLO RENER CONSTITUTIONALLY IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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STALLED RATHER THAN A SOMOZA-FAMILY COUP.

5. DR. AGUERO WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INTERIM COALITION OF THE LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE PARTIES PLUS THE GN WHICH WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR NEW DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. AS THIS IS AN EXTRA-CONSTITUTIONAL SOLUTION, IT WOULD REQUIRE OUTSIDE PRESSURE (READ THE US) TO ACHIEVE.

6. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS AT PRESENT OF PLANNING BY THE FSLN REVOLUTIONARIES OR ANY OF THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS TO INITIATE ANY ATTACKS OR MASS ACTIVITIES DURING THIS PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY. HOWEVER, SUCH ACTIVITY BY EITHER TERRORIST OR POLITICAL ACTIVISTS COULD NOT BE RULED OUT. UDEL'S CHAMORRO BELIEVES SUCH ACTIVITY WOULD BE LEGITIMATE IF ITS GOAL WERE TO END THE SOMOZA REGIME AND REPLACE IT WITH, WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS, A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

7. THE GN AND GOVERNMENT ARE PROCEEDING ON A BUSINESS-AS-USUAL BASIS. THERE WAS A MEETING OF THE CHIEFS OF STAFF AND SPECIAL STAFF ON JULY 26 DURING WHICH GN INSPECTOR GENERAL, GEN. JOSE R. SOMOZA AND MAJOR ANASTASIO (TACHITO) SOMOZA P. DISCUSSED THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION AND APPARENTLY URGED CALMNESS. THE US MIL GROUP COMMANDER AND DEF ATT CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUP TO BE EXTREMELY REMOTE AT THIS TIME.

8. COMMENT: THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALL THIS POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS THE POLITICAL LIFE OF NICARAGUA. THE EMB AGREES WITH THE ASSUMPTION OF THE OPPOSITION THAT, EVEN IF SOMOZA RECOVERS, IT IS EXTREMELY LIKELY THAT HIS ACTIVE CONTROL WILL BE PERMANENTLY WEAKENED. WHETHER THE OUTCOME OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IS A NEW GOVERNMENT, OR RESUMED ACTIVITY BY SOMOZA WE WOULD EXPECT HEIGHTENED POLITICAL RESTIVENESS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD.
RUBENSTEIN

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